

REMARKS

Please reconsider the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Applicant thanks the Examiner for carefully considering this application.

Disposition of Claims

Claims 1-9 were pending. Claims 1-8 have been cancelled and claim 10 has been added by way of this reply. Therefore, claims 9-10 are currently pending in this application.

Claim Amendments

Claim 9 has been amended in this reply to clarify the technical meaning of the topology. Support for this amendment may be found, for example, in the original claims and Figures 1 and 2. New claim 10 has been added in this reply. Support for this amendment may be found, for example, in paragraph [0036]. No new matter has been added by these amendments.

Objection to the Title

The title was objected to for being non-descriptive. The title has been amended to be descriptive.

Double Patenting Rejection

Claims 1-8 are provisionally rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as claiming the same invention as that of claims 1-8 of copending Application No. 10/403,817. Claims 1-8 have been cancelled by way of this reply. Accordingly, this rejection is now moot.

Rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C § 102

Claim 9 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by US Patent No. 6,754,868 issued to Bristow et al. ("Bristow"). Claim 9 has been amended by this reply. To the extent that this rejection may still apply to the amended claim, this rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 9, as amended, is directed to a method for testing devices under test (hereinafter, "DUTs") in parallel with control apparatuses by utilizing a connection setting section between them. Independent claim 9 requires, in part, the step of acquiring a connection switching setting data indicating *which one of the plurality of site control apparatuses* is to be connected with *each of the test modules*. Independent claim 9 further requires, in part, the step of *connecting each of control apparatuses with test modules* based on the connection switching setting data so that *each control apparatus is connected with the plurality of devices under test*.

Given the connection between the control apparatus and the plurality of DUTs based on the connection switching setting data as described above, each control apparatus can be *arbitrarily* connected with the test modules. This allows the test method of the claimed invention to efficiently assign test modules to DUTs according to the number of the terminals, the arrangement of the terminals, the type of the terminals, the type of the test, etc. (*See e.g.*, publication of the Specification, paragraph [0036]). In one embodiment according to the claimed invention as shown in Figure 1, test module 150c is connected to and controlled by site control apparatus 130a. However, in another embodiment as shown in Figure 2, test module 150c is connected to and controlled by site control apparatus 130b. As such, the connections

between the site control apparatuses and the test modules can be *flexibly* rearranged by simply changing the topology data *without rearranging the hardware configuration*.

Bristow shows an apparatus for testing a DUT comprising a pattern generator; multiple pin electronics channels (P/Es); multiple time and format circuits (T/Fs); a pin scrambling circuit coupled between the pattern generator and T/Fs, the pin scrambling circuit capable of mapping at least two signals from any of the plurality of pattern generator outputs to any one of the plurality of T/Fs, and a method for testing a DUT using said apparatus. Specifically, Bristow discloses an apparatus wherein T/Fs are capable of switching the signals coupled to P/Es at least twice each clock cycle. Bristow fails to disclose any method to *flexibly* connect test site computers and DUTs.

More specifically, Bristow discloses in Figure 3 a test site 105 having test site computer 125, pattern generator 140, pin scrambling circuit 155, T/Fs 150, and P/Es 145. Also, Bristow discloses in Figure 10 a test system having multiple test sites 105-1, 105-2, ... , 105-n, where the respective test site performs the same function as the test site 105 in Figure 3. However, it is noteworthy that T/Fs 150 and P/Es 145 in the test site **105-1** cannot be connected with the test site computer of the test site **105-2** because the pin scrambler 155 is not able to set such topology. Therefore, the test system of Bristow is in contrast to the system of claimed invention, where test module 150c can be connected to and controlled by either site control apparatus **130a** as in Figure 1 or site control apparatus **130b** as in Figure 2 as discussed above.

In view of the above, Bristow does not contemplate any method to flexibly set the topology between a control apparatus and test modules. Because the test apparatus of Bristow is systematically fixed, the steps to flexibly set a topology as required by the claims are not performed in Bristow. Therefore, Bristow fails to disclose or suggest all the limitations as

required by amended claim 9. Thus, claim 9, as amended, is patentable over Bristow. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.


Claim 10 has been added in this reply. Claim 10 is dependent on claim 9 and, therefore, is patentable for at least the same reasons set forth above. Accordingly, entry and favorable consideration of new claim 10 is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Applicant believes this reply is fully responsive to all outstanding issues and places this application in condition for allowance. If this belief is incorrect, or other issues arise, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned or his associates at the telephone number listed below. Please apply any charges not covered, or any credits, to Deposit Account 50-0591 (Reference Number 02008/106002).

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